

The Financial Times of Indiana

Balanced Budget news from the Office of Governor Frank O'Bannon

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

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The News in brief...

Among the \$109 million in cuts Governor O'Bannon detailed last week was the continued slowdown in the expansion of CHOICE, the program that helps seniors and Hoosiers with disabilities get in-home health care rather than in nursing homes. It was **the** most painful cut he made, the Governor said, because the program improves lives and should be expanded more quickly.

But the state has a severe budget crisis, and **must** cut back, even in these important areas, if the budget is to be balanced. Correcting the budget is the first step toward providing Hoosiers with the help they deserve and need.

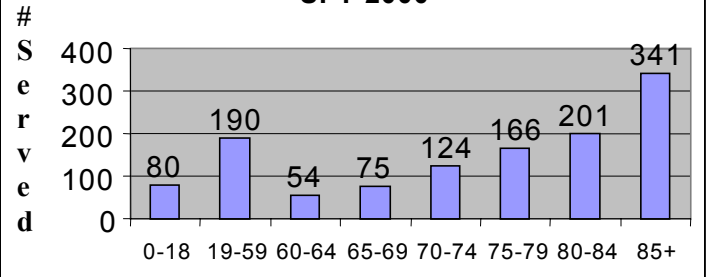
Another important service is Hoosier Rx, the program that helps low-income, elderly Hoosiers afford prescription medicine. Some of these citizens have had to choose between buying groceries, paying their utility bills or buying their medicine.

In better economic times, Indiana has been able to reach out to help thousands of people who needed that help, but more are in need. Without action from the Indiana General Assembly to correct the budget, the state will not be able to provide that help. Instead, more cuts to these important services may have to be made.

Community and Home Options to Institutional Care for the Elderly* (CHOICE)

*also serves Hoosiers of any age with disabilities

Ages of Persons Served by CHOICE in SFY 2000



Source: IN Family and Social Services Administration
2000 Home Services Annual Report

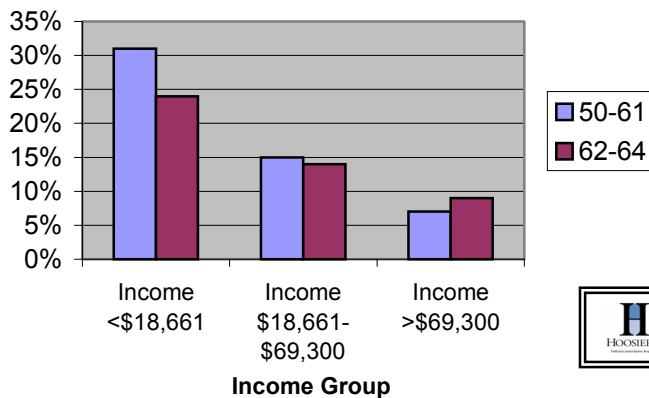
Giving Hoosiers a CHOICE

Thousands of Hoosiers were able to stay in their homes last year rather than having to be placed in an institutional setting thanks to the Community and Home Options to Institutional Care for the Elderly and Disabled (CHOICE) Program. Thousands of other frail Hoosiers, hoping to also benefit from the service, have placed their names on a waiting list that continues to grow faster than the number of people served.

Hoosiers aged 60 or older and Hoosiers of any age with disabilities are eligible for the program. Those fortunate to be enrolled receive health care, transportation, meals, attendant care, respite care, adult day care, rehabilitation and therapy in their homes. They also receive help with minor home modifications and adaptive aids that enable them to live safely at home.

Many Older Hoosiers Face Health Crisis

Percentage of Persons Age 50-64 without Health Insurance, by Age and Income, 2000



Source: AARP and the Public Policy Institute

Did You Know?

Medicaid Waivers allow Indiana to provide a variety of in-home and community-based services to individuals who would otherwise require the level of care provided in an institutional setting.

Source: Indiana Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning

Hoosier Rx has helped more than 14,000 low-income, elderly Hoosiers get the medicine they need to get and stay healthy. Open to seniors that have a net income of less than \$967 a month, the program is funded by Indiana's portion of the national tobacco settlement -- funds that many other states facing budget problems are using to cover general government expenses. So far, Indiana has been able to spend **all** of its tobacco money on improving Hoosiers' health.

Contact Your Legislator About the Budget:

Senate: [1-800-382-9467](tel:1-800-382-9467) House: [1-800-382-9841](tel:1-800-382-9841)